



# Response to Query

## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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### **FOOD AIRDROP TO AFGHANS UNDERSCORES PRESIDENT'S HUMANITARIAN PLEDGE**

**CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, SOUTH CAROLINA** - The two U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III airlifters that airdropped about 35,000 Humanitarian Daily Rations into Afghanistan early Oct. 8, marked the first U.S. military airdrop of humanitarian aid to the region and the first time this particular type of airdrop has occurred operationally.

The mission -- originating from Ramstein AB, Germany -- was flown under combat conditions from a higher altitude than ever before, making for a "very dangerous mission," said the overall mission commander, Col. Bob Allardice, during a press conference here at 1:15 p.m. CET after the C-17s landed.

"This unprecedented mission to deliver aid to the Afghan people was both very difficult and challenging," Allardice told approximately 50 European, U.S. and international media braving a steady rain. "This airdrop mission was the first installment of President Bush's \$320 million aid package for the people of Afghanistan."

The C-17s parked in front of the press conference area, and the jubilant crews congratulated each other as they exited the aircraft. The C-17 aircrews flew more than 6,500 miles round trip and refueled multiple times during the 22-hour mission to drop the food rations over eastern and northern Afghanistan. Their airdrop came hours after the U.S. and allied forces bombed terrorist targets inside the country.

Due to operational security concerns the airborne mission commander could not be identified, but he did speak to the assembled media about the rigors involved with the mission. "This mission required intensive planning, preparation and coordination," he said. "The success of a demanding and dangerous mission like this is a testament to the professionalism and dedication of our crews and the people who support them."

Approaching the drop zone, the C-17s were depressurized and their cargo doors opened, according to Allardice. At the precise time, the pilots pulled the aircraft nose up about seven degrees and the loadmasters released the specially constructed container delivery systems containing the rations. The containers -- called the Tri-Wall Air Delivery System, or TRIAD -- were tied to a static line that tightened and flipped the containers over once they were clear of the aircraft. Once the containers opened, the pre-packaged food rations were disbursed and spread over the drop zone.

"We determined our drop zones taking into account where the people who needed the aid are located, potential threats in the area, and existing wind conditions to maximize accuracy to the best of our ability," Allardice said. "Our goal was to get the aid to the right people, without putting them at undue risk."

Each of the 2,200-calorie ready-to-eat food rations provides an entire day's nutritional requirement for one person. Each packet contains two main vegetarian meals based heavily on lentils, beans and/or rice. It also has complementary items such as bread, a fruit bar, a fortified biscuit, peanut butter and spices.

"One meal provides enough nutrition for an entire day for one person, but needs to be supplemented with liquids," said Capt. Dana Whelan, a registered dietician with the 86<sup>th</sup> Medical Group here. "The meals are a good source of protein, fortified with vitamins and minerals and are appropriate for someone in a poor state of nutrition." (USAFE News Service)

**(For more information, contact Master Sgt. Dan Murphy at 963-5582 or Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith at 963-5589)**